



FASHION INTERNATIONAL

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PARIS PRET-A-PORTER: "FREE CHOICE"

The Spring-Summer message from Paris gives one a free choice fashion menu with soft, pretty dresses served up along side unconstructed sportives and folkloric inspirations. Most of the designs are more suitable for resort wear than for city streets. In general, the silhouettes are easy, floating, lissome and soft. Current design inspiration is coming from Polynesia, flamenco Spain, Parisian cancan, South American Bahia, Turkey, Greece and India.

OVERVIEW:

BARENESS, BOSOMS and LEGS head the bill of fare. Although lengths vary from mini to calf, legs stay in focus throughout, from cuffed short-shorts (Dior), to tight brief shorts (Hechter, Kenzo), to rompers (Castelbajac, Miyake), to discreet Bermudas (St. Laurent, Cacharel, Chloe). Legs also peep through high side slits on skirts, dresses, and pants -- and from skirts caught up at the waist on one side (Milan, Nov. FI).

MINIS, revived by Kenzo last April, are now included by everyone, even if it's only a token number. But the '77 mini is newly proportioned with hip focus via belting, banding, wrapping or elasticizing -- and ranges from giant billowing batwing blousons (Kenzo) to 20's flappers (Dorothy Bis). Slightly elongated mini tops are shown over fractionally-longer mini-skirts, and colored tights, or narrow Nehru trousers that fall into folds at the ankle. Denim devotees will just pop them on over jeans.

BOSOMS are IN (or falling OUT!), most spectacular being St. Laurent's CORSELETS, which give swelling curves to even the flattest chests ... Narrow SQUARE-CUT open vest (Valentino) and SURPLICE-WRAPPED CUMMERBUNDS with suspender straps (Chloe) give added impetus to layering ...

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SPRING -- WITH A HINT OF SUMMER

With Spring notoriously ephemeral, and Easter falling on the second Sunday in April, designers have prepared for all weather eventualities. Whether crisp or soft, the look has "poor man" simple-styling, with "rich man" details.

COMMON DENOMINATORS:

- ... SEPARATES into SUITS
- ... SEPARATES have FAMILY AFFINITY
- ... SHIRT Interest
- ... Animated SKIRTS
- ... PANTS Perpetual

SEPARATES INTO SUITS: A putting together of separates into suits, with choices of interacting colors and fabrics ... Orange or red terry blazers/tan skirts, shorts, shirts; all white: terry blazer/herringbone twill skirt/Swiss cotton lawn tuxedo shirt (Charles Suppon) -- pink blazer/grey jeans and vest/Liberty print blouse (Patti Cappalli for Jerry Silverman Sport) -- barn red, white or black imported rayon linen legionnaire's tunic jacket/fly front dirndl or two pocket button-front skirt/trousers (Liz Claiborne) ... wool gabardine mixables: navy blazer, bellows pocket/stone grey skirt/lilac poly satin shirt (Betty Hanson) black/white check double-breasted blazer/rice slim silk skirt/black silk shirt; tweed blazer and pants/check vest/print shirt; black silk linen casino blazer/tweed drawstring pants/rice vest (Anne Klein) -- linen back-belted, patch pocket blazer/trouser skirt/tuxedo shirt (Calvin Klein).

SEPARATES AFFINITY: Cotton knit tops/vests/linen skirts in vivid color combines (Richard Assatly for Gino/Snow) -- cotton/silk crash wrap, tucked and dirndl skirts/bulky knit sweaters, blouson, camisole and tunic (Suppon) -- poly/cotton Army twill in straw and clay colors: fishing vest, mechanics and safari jackets, zip front

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SPRING -- WITH A HINT OF SUMMER (continued from page 1)

blouson/button-front straight and bias-flare dirndl skirts (Liz Claiborne) -- varied blue/white stripes on broadcloth and Oxford, all are interchangeable, have haberdashery look, come with espadrilles in signature bag: "big" overshirt with white collar/cuffs, short sleeve boys' camp shirt/single or double-breasted striped blazers/white Oxford pants, Bermudas, skirts (Ralph Lauren) -- natural color linen or twill: 4-button blazer, neckband collar jacket/trousers/jeanskirt (Calvin Klein).

SHIRT INTEREST: The haberdashery look still very much in the running, but the newest shirts are softened -- Katherine Hepburn look, boxy with rollup sleeves (Patti Cappalli) ... Soft fabrics, silk, satin, crepe, for tailored shirts (Patti Cappalli, Betty Hanson) ... Cotton eyelet for a cascade ruffle blouse in black; for the Edwardian shirt, Gibson girl, tucked with square yoke in white (Claiborne) ... Scalloped, embroidered, tucked handkerchief linen blouses in sand, cream, white putty (Calvin Klein).

ANIMATED SKIRTS: Kilts (Cappalli) -- culottes, wrap, front panels (Hanson) -- Wrap dirndl (Lauren) -- buttonfront bias dirndl (Claiborne) -- pinwale corduroy 4-gore dirndl (Calvin Klein).

PANTS PERPETUAL: More shapes from soft to severe -- softly man-tailored (Cappalli) -- drawstring satin (Suppon) Bermuda, walking shorts (Claiborne, Lauren, Suppon) -- clam-diggers (Cappalli) -- skinny jeans (Patti Cappalli, Liz Claiborne).

LOW-THERMAL SWEATERS: In mercerized cotton: cabled cardigan and vest, shoulder-button crew, cap-sleeve T, multi-stripe camisole (Claiborne) -- cotton-knit vest, acrylic pullover and cardigan; cashmere athletic tank shirt, drawstring-neck tunic sweater (Calvin Klein).

ACTIVE SPORTSWEAR: Flag blue, red, yellow, turquoise, black cotton knit T-shirt dresses, novelty knit boatneck sweaters, hooded boating jackets (Harve Benard) -- rolled sleeve striped regatta top/cotton Bermudas (Blassport) -- contrast banded white cotton knit interchangeables: Tank tops, athletic drawstring shorts, zip front warmup jackets; D-ring boxer shorts/roll sleeve blouson; cable-knit vest, cardigan, tennis pullover;

white satin-striped shirts, some sleeveless/shorts/ heavier weight terry-lined hooded beach robe (Calvin Klein) -- short, muscle sleeve navy tennis Speedsuit/white crepe mini skirt (Vera Maxwell).

TRIMS: Signs of the season are contrast color PIPINGS and BANDINGS outlining seams -- shoulders, yokes, armholes, even side seams; also edging sashes, necklines, sleeves.

FABRICS/COLORS: Natural fibers win out: linen, from handkerchief to suiting-weight ... Silk, from raw to tissue-weight China silk ... Cotton the biggest: from Swiss lawn and batiste, to Oxford, to Army twill ... Novelties range from eyelets to dish-cloth mesh to crash and lenos ... Natural colors strong, from white through all the neutral variations.

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DRESSES GAIN IMPORTANCE

Most designers are showing dresses, evidence of the strength of the dress revival. American designers concentrate on variations of the ubiquitous shirt dress -- the truly American classic; not, however, losing sight of other currently successful shapes, such as the wrap dress and the sundress.

SHIRTDRESSES: Because the success dress is no mere re-run, FI calls it Son-Of-Shirt dress -- big rolled-up sleeves, often a neckband, roped, sashed or drawstring waist, important pockets, easy-moving skirt -- shirting stripes/scarf (Beene) -- Double-track vertical tucks, banded neck and placket, in moire-printed silk; dancing couples and stylized flower-center print on white, trimmed with stripe composed of print (Casi) -- in tightly woven white yachting cloth, tab-front, double-stitched breast and slash pockets, rolled short sleeves (Cathy Hardwick) -- in SIGNATURE PRINTS: Blue VM's on white cotton, patch pocketed button-front (Vera Maxwell) -- signature logo calligraphy print on white cotton, white mandarin collar, placket, cuffs, belt and "two-story" double breast pockets (Thai Lines) ... Capped shoulder button-front with Western pockets, button-down flapped pockets attached to toggle belt (Albert Capraro) -- in sheer poly/cotton, print collar and cuffs (Schrader Sport) -- woven-stripe button-front, rolled

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SHOULDERS, too, are IN (or OUT!) -- a flurry of oversized sweaters, blouses and dresses sport necklines that drop off one or both shoulders, or have closings purposely left undone. BARE MIDRIFTS and SEE-THROUGHS are now so standard, hardly a flash bulb of interest was raised by transparent chiffon tops (St. Laurent), black net or raffia skirts (Claude Montana, Thierry Mugler, Kenzo), gossamer thin, body-revealing Summer knitwear (Kenzo), or loin cloths (Yamamoto).

KEY SILHOUETTES:

DRESSES: Important, especially for Summer -- many are two-piece -- some strapless convert to mid-calf skirts, or, by ingenious elasticizing, to mini or knee lengths -- BARE TUBES -- 2-piece TUNICS -- T's -- sundresses ... AFTER 5's are gentled with folkloric lingerie lace or floral appliques ... DETAILS: Empire -- tunnel waist -- double belts -- sashes -- scarfs -- corselets -- wrap-and-tie cummerbunds -- bra, camisole, tied and banded tops ... Deep side slits -- flounces -- ruffles -- panniers -- controlled fullness -- inverted, knife, sunburst and Fortuny pleats -- scalloped hems ... Split-elbow, wing-cap, puffed, full, capelet and kimono sleeves.

SKIRTS: Sarong wrap, tiered, ruffled, flounced, divided -- drop waist, long torso, yoked -- soft flare, dirndl, hip stitched, knife and accordion pleated.

PANTS: Zouave is new, bloused at the knee, with high waist a la Turquie (St. Laurent) -- harem, knickers, gathered ankles -- open side-wrap -- skinny -- turned up, cuffed or uncuffed -- elasticized behind knee or ankle, with front falling straight, but tapered (Rykiel) ... SHORTS -- Bermudas -- short shorts -- rompers.

TRIMS: Ribbons, lace, eyelet, mesh -- ball fringe, rickrack -- flower and other appliques -- piping and other touches of gold.

ACCESSORIES: HEAD -- raffia in the hair, garlands of flowers or laurel leaves on the head -- South American straw bowlers, fezzes, turbans, headbands -- scarfs wrapped about the head or -- WAIST -- corselet belts ... FEET -- flat Biblical sandals, sneakers, ankle-tie espadrilles, flat boots with heel pocket -- high heels with laced ankles -- bobby socks.

FABRICS: LINEN, from handkerchief to heavier weight ... FUNCTIONALS -- Terry toweling, velours, serge, poplin, seersucker, Ottoman rib, whipcord, sweatshirt cotton, strawcloth, etamine, burlap, CORDUROY, CANVAS, DENIM, RAW SILK, paratrooper cloth ... RAFFINE -- Cotton-satine, chintz, broadcloth, cotton damask, crepon ... DELICATES -- lawn, bandage gauze, muslin, voile, dotted Swiss ... ELEGANTS -- silk and silk gauze, satin, crepe, crepe de chine, tissue weight and iridescent taffeta, velvet, chiffon, Lurex-threaded fabrications ... CLASSICS -- Madras plaids, box checks, checkerboards -- pique, gingham, chambray, Oxford cloth, flannel ... KNITS -- interlock, sweater knits, pointelles, boucles, jersey, transparents, shiny.

PATTERNS: Liberty looks, English garden florals, wallpaper stripes, cabbage roses, engineered panels of giant motifs, exotic birds, butterflies -- South Seas, Hawaiian, provincial and peasant florals -- dots, foulards, geometrics, batiks, plaid-and-flower mixes, bayaderes, borders.

COLORS: BRIGHTS -- pimiento red, purple, fuchsia, cornflower, orange, leaf green, sun yellow, turquoise, lively reds -- SHERBETS -- candy pink, coral, lavender, sky blue, mint, lemon -- SUGAR CANDIES -- spun pink, lemon meringue, aqua ... MISTIES -- terra cotta, sage, rose ... DARKS -- wine, cranberry, toast, coffee bean, spinach; vicuna ... NEUTRALS -- white, ivory, Colonial beige, khaki.

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IMPORTANT DATES

N.Y. - Met. Juvenile Style Mart, Jan. 2-6
N.Y. - Spring Lingerie Market, Jan. 3-14
N.Y. - National Boutique Show, Jan. 6-9
N.Y. - NRMA Annual Convention, Jan. 9-12
N.Y. - Summer Ready-To-Wear, Jan. 10-21
L.A. - N.Y. Fashion Creators, Jan. 14-17
MIAMI - Summer Ready-To-Wear, Jan. 22-25
CHICAGO - Summer Ready-To-Wear, Jan. 21-25
ROME - Spring/Summer Couture, Jan. 18-21
PARIS - Spring/Summer Couture, Jan. 24-27
ATLANTA - Men's Fashion Assoc'n, Jan. 26-30
DALLAS - Summer Ready-To-Wear, Jan. 28-31
PARIS - S.E.H.M.-Menswear, Feb. 5-8
PARIS - Children's Fashions, Feb. 5-8
CHICAGO European Fash Fair, Feb. 27-Mar. 2
ATHENS - Shoe/Leather Fair, March 1-4
HONG KONG - Ready-To-Wear Festival, Mar. 5-11
COLOGNE - Childrenswear Show, March 11-13

DRESSES (continued from page 3)

short sleeves, horizontal striped wrap 'n tie deep blouson sheer cotton crepe (Cathy Hardwick) -- Burberrys trench style, in Oxford cloth with flared cape yoke (Gloria Vanderbilt).

OTHERS: WRAP DRESSES -- navy and white pin-dot cotton, wrap skirt, multi-striped front panel, button front bodice, long sleeve (Parnis Boutique by Morty Sussman) -- matte jersey kimono wrap (Daugherty) -- contrast color band, scalloped and applique white cotton, narrow tunnel belt, slash pockets (A Dos d'Elephant) -- white or black rayon linen, capped shoulders, small lapels, no buttons (Hardwick) ... BLOUSONS, the majority two-piece -- square neck, drawstring waist (Goldworm) -- flounced skirt (Oscar de la Renta) -- leno-knit top, linen skirt (Beene) -- raw silk, gathered skirt (Assatly) ... Other TWO-PIECERS include completely reversible back-wrap skirt and camp shirt, collared and cuffed in opposite color (Thai) -- tunic/dirndl in stripes over challis print; or in dishcloth, banded with linen of skirt (Scott Barrie) -- pale blue chambray dirndl/short jacket trimmed with mini-Madras (Capraro) -- woven-stripe poly/voile banded round neck shirt/knife pleat skirt (Casi) -- nylon stretch Speed-BLOUSE, sailor collar and back-laced sailor skirt in Ultrasuede (Vera Maxwell) ... JUMPERS: in Ultrasuede, doubles as sleeveless coat (Abe Schrader) -- piped waffle pique wraparound (Carol Horn's Habitat) -- suspender style in architecturally jagged pinstripe crepe de chine (Jeannene Booher for David Morris) ... FOLKLORICS are mostly PEASANTS, a few FRONTIER dresses.

SUNDRESSES, ready when the sun is: Signature contrast piping outlines seams, shoulders, armholes and belt of controlled tent with frog fastened shoulder straps (Donald Brooks) -- imported cotton, with stitched camisole bodice (Albert Nipon) --

in embroidered natural muslin (Assatly) -- printed camisole over lilac/rust skirt (Scott Barrie) -- polka dots (Daugherty) -- colorful hand-embroidered bib, tunnel waist, side entry hip pockets; dark border print on two-tone windowpane plaid shift, white yoke and bib (A Dos d'Elephant) -- camisole tops: shoulder buttoned, in Madras, front-tied, with capped-shoulder bolero, in lush, soft Santora poly-knit print; Senessa jersey tank top/striped surplice over it (Clovis Ruffin/Ruffinwear).

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FI BOUTIQUE BEAT -- MADISON AVENUE

Dianne B., 729 Madison Ave. (64th St.), 759-0988. Magnificent potpourri: cloud-colored silk gauze peasant blouses, quilted velvet jackets, patchwork brocades, lacquered crepe jeans, cashmere T-shirts; kimono cropped blouses, made of delicate old embroidered and drawnwork pillow slips; bulky handknit pullovers shot with copper and gold. Upstairs, a complete Dorothee Bis collection of knits.

Menage A Trois, 760 Madison Ave., 249-0500.

A talented trio make and sell their own creations: old lace curtains and filet tablecloths, dyed murky hues and made into dresses. French men's shirts translated into silk for women. French imports, antique silk lingerie, shawls.

Lady Continental, 836 Madison Ave., 988-0110.

A complete wardrobe, to go with their famous shoes and boots: Beautifully tailored glen plaid, striped and velvet suits -- blazer, vest, pants, skirt; silk drawstring pants with engineered off-center striped shirt; 2-piece sweater-knits, boucle, angora, or crochet. Cacharel printed silk and chiffon day and evening dresses. Unusual bloomer pantsuit.

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